



OFFICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Marc Elrich
County Executive

James Stowe
Director

June 18, 2019

Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Marc Elrich,

We, the Commissioners of the Montgomery County Human Rights Commission (MCHRC), have a strong interest in the selection of the new Chief of Police for our community. The Commission's duties to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, intolerance, and bigotry in housing, recreation, education, health, employment, public accommodations, and justice are informed, supported and enhanced by the work done through the Police Department. We write to you today, to share our thoughts and suggestions on the factors we view as critically important for this new hire.

The backdrop to the work of the Commission and the Police Department is our residents. Montgomery County residents represent a wide range of religious, socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups and hail from practically every state in the country and from more than 100 countries in the world. With this desired diversity, challenges arise from the complexity of the individuals who live here and the issues they have. Criminal misbehavior, personal animus towards others, and mental instability are just some of the things that may require police intervention to solve or support.

Thus, above all else, a Montgomery County Chief of Police must be an outstanding listener who seeks first to understand before seeking to be understood, is inherently non-judgmental, gives undivided attention to others, and is able to develop, build, promote and or seek consensus. Also crucial to any success is a Chief of Police who embodies the following traits, characteristics and qualities: Education, Training, and Experience, Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, Open-Minded, Accessible, and Culturally Sensitive, Honesty and Integrity, Leadership. We explain our thoughts on these below:

Education, Training, and Experience

The Chief of Police for Montgomery County must have appropriate education and training, and, perhaps more importantly, substantial experience in a diverse community like Montgomery County. Specifically, extensive experience connecting with officers and people in the community to understand what they go through daily is critically important. We are hopeful for someone who has a record of being out in the field with “boots on the ground.”

A new Chief should be forward-thinking and keep up with the latest technology and knowledge of effective public safety and community relationships. These interests should be matched by a dedication to assuring a trained and modern police department in our County.

Overall, a Police Chief should have ample knowledge of the best practices to follow for the use of body cameras and racial profiling. This requires a full awareness and understanding of implicit biases, effective ways to address hate-violence situations, and proper treatment of immigrants, among other important and contemporaneous issues.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

A Police Chief must be willing to work with and know how to relate with officers and people of all ages, races, religions, and ethnicities. The applicant must display a solid record of treating people of racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic differences with fairness, deep comprehension, and respect.

Our Police Chief must therefore be fully transparent and inclusive in major departmental and community relationship decisions. As a leader, she or he must possess the ability to inspire, bring out the best in the officers, build and solidify trust, and effective community relationships. An inclusive Police Chief mentors, coaches, and builds leadership throughout her or his department, placing officers – regardless of gender, religion, or racial or ethnic background – in key positions and delegates assignments and projects to the most qualified among them.

Open-Minded, Accessible, and Culturally Sensitive

The Chief of Police must be open-minded, accessible, and culturally sensitive with a deep knowledge of the history, local experience and cultural traditions of diverse people within her or his jurisdiction. All residents must feel comfortable, at ease, and free to approach the Police Chief with any issues or concerns they may have about their safety and security. Our previous Chief, Chief Manger, put it succinctly when asked about his advice for his successor, “Be there.”

Honesty and Integrity

Although we assume these qualities go without saying, they are important enough that we included them. A Chief of Police must embody and display honesty and integrity. A Police Chief must have a strong moral compass, a personal code of ethics, and defined values. Without integrity and a full commitment to policing without prejudice and injustice, community trust cannot be fostered or achieved.

Leadership

A Police Chief must radiate strong leadership traits as exemplified by a record of achieving an effective balance between strong support and trust for the women and men of her or his force and an excellent understanding of community public safety and security concerns. A Police Chief must be able to analyze difficult situations, apply flexible tactics and adapt policing methods considering the tremendous diversity of our community, develop viable alternatives, give clear and consistent instructions, solve problems, and manage the department and complex community issues effectively.

A successful Police Chief sets as a top priority the effective recruitment and interpersonal skill development of officers and works continually to enhance both her or his own and the officers' personality strengths and talents. Such a Chief of Police does not hesitate to exercise authority, hold officers accountable, use discipline as appropriate, and demonstrate deep appreciation and gratitude for a police officer's specific accomplishments including brave and selfless acts of outstanding law enforcement.

It is very important to the Human Rights Commission to have a Chief of Police who understands the work of this Commission and can be an effective partner with us in the implementation of our work. We hope you find our input valuable as you move forward in the hiring process.

With our great appreciation,

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS:



Honorable William England (Chair)

Okianer Christian Dark, Esq.
(Vice Chair)

Alejandro Becerra
Russell Campbell
Stuart Campbell
Dr. Jeremiah Floyd
Janice Freeman
Dr. Suresh K. Gupta
Kenneth Kellner

Dr. Rahul M. Jindal
Stephanie Mason
Barron Oakcru
Tiffany Releford, Esq.
Nina Weisbroth
Terry Vann, Esq.

CC: Nancy Navarro, County Council President
Sidney Katz, County Council Vice President
Andrew Kleine, Chief Administrative Officer